

What is Claimed:

1. A memories product generation system for automatically generating a memories product, said memories product being customized for at least one of a customer and a recipient, said memories product generation system comprising:

means for inputting a plurality of memories materials, each of which comprises data that represents a display object;

means for providing a customer with an interface to define at least one topic for said memories product;

means for storing data that identifies at least one of a customer and a recipient who is to receive said memories product; and

means for automatically generating at least one memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials, said at least one memories product being in a form and content that is customized for said at least one of a customer and a recipient.

2. The memories product generation system of claim 1 wherein said means for inputting a plurality of memories materials comprises:

means for digitizing at least one image; and

means for uploading said at least one digitized image to a memory.

3. The memories product generation system of claim 2 wherein said memory is located remotely from said means for automatically generating, said means for inputting a plurality of memories materials further comprises:

means for transmitting said at least one digitized image to a memory collocated with said means for automatically generating via a communication medium that interconnects said remotely located memory with said means for automatically generating.

4. The memories product generation system of claim 1 wherein said means for inputting a plurality of memories materials comprises:

means for accessing a memory that stores a plurality of memories materials;

and

5 means for uploading at least one of said plurality of memories materials via a communication medium.

5. The memories product generation system of claim 1 wherein said means for providing a customer with an interface comprises:

10 means for retrieving at least one of recipient and customer characteristic data from said customer via a series of queries presented to said customer via at least one display screen.

6. The memories product generation system of claim 5 wherein said means for providing a customer with an interface further comprises:

15 means for storing said characteristic data in a memory.

7. The memories product generation system of claim 5 wherein said means for providing a customer with an interface further comprises:

20 means for retrieving said characteristic data from a memory located remote from said means for automatically generating in response to said customer identifying said memory.

8. The memories product generation system of claim 1 wherein said memories product contains at least one page, said means for automatically generating comprises:

means for producing a layout for said page of said memories product, said page layout comprising a plurality of display objects, each display object having a plurality of characteristics which define a content of an image created from said

display object and a locus of said image created from said display object on said page.

9. The memories product generation system of claim 8 further comprising:

5 means for enabling said customer to manipulate said display objects, including at least one of the display object manipulation functions of: crop, rotate, size, reposition, enlarge, and the like.

10. The memories product generation system of claim 9 further comprising:

10 means for automatically selecting at least one display attribute for said page excluding said display images, from the class of display attributes including: titles, borders, backgrounds, graphics, stories and placement of memories materials.

11. The memories product generation system of claim 1 wherein said means

15 for automatically generating comprises:

means for automatically generating at least one virtual memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials and viewable in electronic form by said customer.

12. The memories product generation system of claim 11 wherein said

20 means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for enabling said customer to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

13. The memories product generation system of claim 12 wherein said

25 means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for enabling said customer to store said at least one virtual memories product in memory.

14. The memories product generation system of claim 13 wherein said means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for retrieving said stored virtual memories product from said memory;

and

5 means for enabling said customer to edit said retrieved virtual memories product to create another virtual memories product.

15. The memories product generation system of claim 11 further comprising:

10 means for routing said at least one virtual memories product, viewable in electronic form, to at least one individual other than said customer.

16. The memories product generation system of claim 15 wherein said means for automatically generating further comprises:

15 means for enabling said at least one individual to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

17. The memories product generation system of claim 11 wherein said means for automatically generating further comprises:

20 means for enabling said customer to initiate production of said at least one memories product from said at least one virtual memories product.

18. The memories product generation system of claim 1 wherein said means for automatically generating comprises:

25 means for correlating a topic selected by said customer with said memories materials and said data that identifies at least one of a customer and a recipient who is to receive said memories product to automatically select a plurality of memories materials for inclusion in said at least one memories product.

19. The memories product generation system of claim 18 wherein said

means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for automatically formatting said selected plurality of memories materials into at least one virtual memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials and viewable in electronic form by said customer.

20. The memories product generation system of claim 19 wherein said means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for enabling said customer to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

21. The memories product generation system of claim 20 wherein said means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for enabling said customer to store said at least one virtual memories product in memory.

22. The memories product generation system of claim 21 wherein said means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for retrieving said stored virtual memories product from said memory; and

means for enabling said customer to edit said retrieved virtual memories product to create another virtual memories product.

23. The memories product generation system of claim 21 wherein said means for automatically generating further comprises:

means for enabling said customer to initiate production of said at least one memories product from said at least one virtual memories product.

24. A method for automatically generating a memories product, said

memories product being customized for at least one of a customer and a recipient, said method for automatically generating a memories product comprising the steps of:

inputting a plurality of memories materials, each of which comprises data that represents a display object;

5 providing a customer with an interface to define at least one topic for said memories product;

storing data that identifies at least one of a customer and a recipient who is to receive said memories product; and

10 automatically generating at least one memories product at a memories product output device, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials, said at least one memories product being in a form and content that is customized for said at least one of a customer and a recipient.

25. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 15 24 wherein said step of inputting a plurality of memories materials comprises: digitizing at least one image; and uploading said at least one digitized image to a memory.

20 26. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 25 wherein said memory is located remotely from said memories product output device, said step of inputting a plurality of memories materials further comprises: transmitting said at least one digitized image to a memory collocated with said memories product output device via a communication medium that interconnects said remotely located memory with said memories product output device.

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27. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 24 wherein said step of inputting a plurality of memories materials comprises: accessing a memory that stores a plurality of memories materials; and uploading at least one of said plurality of memories materials via a

communication medium.

28. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 24 wherein said step of providing a customer with an interface comprises:

5 retrieving at least one of recipient and customer characteristic data from said customer via a series of queries presented to said customer via at least one display screen.

29. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 10 28 wherein said step of providing a customer with an interface further comprises: storing said characteristic data in a memory.

30. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 28 wherein said step of providing a customer with an interface further comprises:

15 retrieving said characteristic data from a memory located remote from said memories product output device in response to said customer identifying said memory.

31. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 20 24 wherein said memories product contains at least one page, said step of automatically generating comprises:

25 producing a layout for said page of said memories product, said page layout comprising a plurality of display objects, each display object having a plurality of characteristics which define a content of an image created from said display object and a locus of said image created from said display object on said page.

32. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 31 further comprising the step of:

enabling said customer to manipulate said display objects, including at least

one of the display object manipulation functions of: crop, rotate, size, reposition, enlarge, and the like.

33. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 5 32 further comprising the step of:

automatically selecting at least one display attribute for said page excluding said display images, from the class of display attributes including: titles, borders, backgrounds, graphics, stories and placement of memories materials.

10 34. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 24 wherein said step of automatically generating comprises:

automatically generating at least one virtual memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials and viewable in electronic form by said customer.

15 35. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 34 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:

enabling said customer to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

20 36. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 35 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:

enabling said customer to store said at least one virtual memories product in memory.

25 37. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 36 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:

retrieving said stored virtual memories product from said memory; and
enabling said customer to edit said retrieved virtual memories product to create another virtual memories product.

38. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 34 further comprising the step of:

routing said at least one virtual memories product, viewable in electronic form, to at least one individual other than said customer.

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39. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 38 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:

enabling said at least one individual to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

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40. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 34 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:

enabling said customer to initiate production of said at least one memories product from said at least one virtual memories product.

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41. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 24 wherein said step of automatically generating comprises:

correlating a topic selected by said customer with said memories materials and said data that identifies at least one of a customer and a recipient who is to receive said memories product to automatically select a plurality of memories materials for inclusion in said at least one memories product.

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42. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim 41 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:

automatically formatting said selected plurality of memories materials into at least one virtual memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials and viewable in electronic form by said customer.

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43. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim

42 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:
 enabling said customer to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

44. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim

5 43 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:
 enabling said customer to store said at least one virtual memories product in
 memory.

45. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim

10 44 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:
 retrieving said stored virtual memories product from said memory; and
 enabling said customer to edit said retrieved virtual memories product to create
 another virtual memories product.

15 46. The method for automatically generating a memories product of claim

44 wherein said step of automatically generating further comprises:
 enabling said customer to initiate production of said at least one memories
 product from said at least one virtual memories product.

20 47. A memories product generation system for automatically generating a
 memories product, said memories product being customized for at least one of a
 customer and a recipient, said memories product generation system comprising:

memories materials input means for inputting a plurality of memories materials,
 each of which comprises data that represents a display object;

25 customer interface means for providing a customer with an interface to define
 at least one topic for said memories product;

memory means for storing data that identifies at least one of a customer and
 a recipient who is to receive said memories product; and

automated memories product generation means for automatically generating

at least one memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials, said at least one memories product being in a form and content that is customized for said at least one of a customer and a recipient.

5 48. The memories product generation system of claim 47 wherein said memories materials input means comprises:

image input means for digitizing at least one image; and

communication means for uploading said at least one digitized image to a memory.

10 49. The memories product generation system of claim 48 wherein said memory is located remotely from said memories product generation means, said memories materials input means further comprises:

15 data communication means for transmitting said at least one digitized image to a memory collocated with said memories product generation means via a communication medium that interconnects said remotely located memory with said memories product generation means.

20 50. The memories product generation system of claim 47 wherein said memories materials input means comprises:

data communication means for accessing a memory that stores a plurality of memories materials; and

data retrieval means for uploading at least one of said plurality of memories materials via a communication medium.

25 51. The memories product generation system of claim 47 wherein said customer interface means comprises:

profile means for retrieving at least one of recipient and customer characteristic data from said customer via a series of queries presented to said customer via at least

one display screen.

52. The memories product generation system of claim 51 wherein said customer interface means further comprises:

5 database means for storing said characteristic data in a memory.

53. The memories product generation system of claim 51 wherein said customer interface means further comprises:

10 data retrieval means for retrieving said characteristic data from a memory located remote from said memories product generation means in response to said customer identifying said memory.

54. The memories product generation system of claim 47 wherein said memories product contains at least one page, said memories product generation means comprises:

15 layout means for producing a layout for said page of said memories product, said page layout comprising a plurality of display objects, each display object having a plurality of characteristics which define a content of an image created from said display object and a locus of said image created from said display object on said
20 page.

55. The memories product generation system of claim 54 further comprising:

25 image editing means for enabling said customer to manipulate said display objects, including at least one of the display object manipulation functions of: crop, rotate, size, reposition, enlarge, and the like.

56. The memories product generation system of claim 55 further comprising:

display editing means for automatically selecting at least one display attribute for said page excluding said display images, from the class of display attributes

including: titles, borders, backgrounds, graphics, stories and placement of memories materials.

5 57. The memories product generation system of claim 47 wherein said memories product generation means comprises:

automated layout means for automatically generating at least one virtual memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials and viewable in electronic form by said customer.

10 58. The memories product generation system of claim 57 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

virtual memories product editing means for enabling said customer to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

15 59. The memories product generation system of claim 58 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

memories materials storage means for enabling said customer to store said at least one virtual memories product in memory.

20 60. The memories product generation system of claim 59 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

virtual memories product retrieval means for retrieving said stored virtual memories product from said memory; and

25 virtual memories product editing means for enabling said customer to edit said retrieved virtual memories product to create another virtual memories product.

61. The memories product generation system of claim 47 further comprising:
alternate access means for routing said at least one virtual memories product, viewable in electronic form, to at least one individual other than said customer.

62. The memories product generation system of claim 61 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

virtual memories product editing means for enabling said at least one individual to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

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63. The memories product generation system of claim 57 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

memories production system means for enabling said customer to initiate production of said at least one memories product from said at least one virtual memories product.

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64. The memories product generation system of claim 47 wherein said memories product generation means comprises:

profile means for correlating a topic selected by said customer with said memories materials and said data that identifies at least one of a customer and a recipient who is to receive said memories product to automatically select a plurality of memories materials for inclusion in said at least one memories product.

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65. The memories product generation system of claim 64 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

automated layout means for automatically formatting said selected plurality of memories materials into at least one virtual memories product, that comprises a plurality of display objects formed from said memories materials and viewable in electronic form by said customer.

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66. The memories product generation system of claim 65 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

virtual memories product editing means for enabling said customer to edit said at least one virtual memories product.

67. The memories product generation system of claim 66 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

memories materials storage means for enabling said customer to store said at least one virtual memories product in memory.

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68. The memories product generation system of claim 67 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

virtual memories product retrieval means for retrieving said stored virtual memories product from said memory; and

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virtual memories product editing means for enabling said customer to edit said retrieved virtual memories product to create another virtual memories product.

69. The memories product generation system of claim 67 wherein said memories product generation means further comprises:

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production system means for enabling said customer to initiate production of said at least one memories product from said at least one virtual memories product.